

**Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:** Madam Speaker, we need to work together to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act; but, unfortunately, H.R. 4970 is seriously flawed and should not pass.

Among its many flaws, it harms immigrant women and fails to protect the LGBT community. It also creates new mandatory minimum sentences. Mandatory minimums have been studied extensively, and they've been found to be ineffective in addressing crime, while at the same time they distort the rational sentencing systems, they discriminate against minorities, and they often violate common sense.

Mandatory minimums can be particularly harmful in domestic relations cases, domestic violence cases where the victim and the abuser have a prior relationship, and where the victim of abuse may be less likely to report the abuse knowing that, if convicted, the abuser is certain to go to prison for 5 or 10 years without parole. That's why many organizations dedicated to ending domestic violence and working hard for the reauthorization of VAWA are opposed to the mandatory minimum provisions in the rule.

On top of these problems in the reported bill, the Rules Committee adopted a manager's amendment that, among other problems, deletes protections against discrimination in hiring by religious organizations using VAWA funds.

Since the 1960s, we have had, as a Federal policy, a prohibition against discrimination based on religion when using Federal funds. The 1964 Civil Rights Act had an exemption for churches and other religious organizations using their own funds to be able to consider religion in hiring. However, the manager's amendment specifically allows those groups to discriminate based on religion with Federal funds. We should not pass a bill that allows a person applying for a job paid for with Federal funds to be discriminated against based on religion.

Madam Speaker, we must work hard to reauthorize VAWA; but, unfortunately, H.R. 4970 in its current form is not the version of VAWA we should pass, and the rule does not allow amendments to improve the bill. So I urge defeat of this rule.